

Summary: Allegations of Retaliation Against an FWS Region 4 Employee

Report Date: December 9, 2016

OIG investigated whether a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Region 4 employee was the victim of retaliation, harassment, and a hostile work environment. The employee claimed that Region 4 managers retaliated after the employee alleged management impropriety, including prohibited personnel practices, nepotism, falsification of Government documents, intimidation, and failure to investigate allegations of wrongdoing.

We found that there was an appearance of retaliation against the employee after the employee alleged, in January 2013, that an FWS supervisor was not abiding by the terms of a settlement agreement. The employee had not received disciplinary action before the January 2013 complaint, but over the next three years, the employee was disciplined six times culminating in an August 2016 proposed removal from Federal service. The employee's first and second level supervisors admitted that they knew about the initial complaint; however, they claimed the subsequent personnel actions were to address performance and disciplinary issues and they consulted with human resources.

This is a summary of a report of investigation that was issued to the U.S. Department of Interior Chief of Staff, and to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel.

